

Revelation 11

1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

John was given a measuring stick by the angel (compare Ezekiel 40:3,5).

Ezekiel 40:3,5 And he brought me thither, and, behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed; and he stood in the gate. [5] And behold a wall on the outside of the house round about, and in the man's hand a measuring reed of six cubits long by the cubit and an hand breadth: so he measured the breadth of the building, one reed; and the height, one reed.

He was commanded to measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who were worshipping there. Because of this description we know that it is the earthly temple in Jerusalem that is being referred to. This means that a new temple must be built by the end of the first 3½ years of the tribulation period. The measuring of it might indicate God's disapproval of and subsequent judgement upon it. The worshippers are Jews who believe that they are serving God. During this time the 144,000 will still be preaching the everlasting Gospel, which is Christ and Him Crucified.

2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

“The court of the gentiles”, otherwise known as “the outer court”, is where Gentiles were permitted to enter. This again reveals the earthly location of the temple, for there is no such distinction in Heaven. It seems that God will not honour the presence of those who oppressed the Jews, therefore they are not counted. For 3½ years the non-Jewish nations will control or rule Jerusalem (Daniel 12:7).

Daniel 12:7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

This may be an indication that Jerusalem will be totally given to the Jews shortly after the Rapture of the Church. With this Temple in place, it must mean that the Muslim Dome of the Rock must be removed or destroyed, which in turn infers that Islam must be rendered powerless.

The Antichrist and his forces will be readying themselves to take the Temple and install his image, thus defiling the Holy Place (see 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Matthew 24:20-22).

2 Thessalonians 2:4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

This act of sacrilege will cause the Jews to realise their error in accepting him as messiah, so they will flee into the wilderness (Petra).

Matthew 24:20-22 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

This verse introduces us to the Two Witnesses. These men will prophesy during the first 3½ years of the tribulation period. It is

significant that there are two witnesses, for they will confirm God's Word, Gospel and Judgements (Deuteronomy 17:6).

Deuteronomy 17:6 At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.

Most commentators believe that these men are Elijah and Moses. Both Elijah and Moses appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus; when they passed from this earth in the Old Testament their bodies were never found by those who searched for them (2 Kings 2:11-12; Deuteronomy 34:4-6; Jude :9).

2 Kings 2:11-12 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

Deuteronomy 34:4-6 And the LORD said unto him, This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

Jude :9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

It is highly likely and appropriate that they should be God's Two Witnesses in the last days, for they are considered to be the most influential figures of Judaism. Elijah must return before the Millennial Kingdom is set up (Malachi 4:5).

Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

Please note that John the Baptist was not Elijah (how could he be?), instead his ministry of being the preparer of the way was only in the same spirit as Elijah (Luke 1:17; Matthew 17:11-12).

Luke 1:17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Matthew 17:11-12 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

Others believe that they are Elijah and Enoch since both went to Heaven without dying. It is of significance that it was Moses and Elijah that conversed with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Whoever they really are, they will travel throughout Jerusalem (and possibly the land of Israel) preaching and dressed in sackcloth like the stereotypical prophet. The Jews will obviously be rejoicing now they have their temple, but the two witnesses will mourn over Jerusalem because they see her true spiritual condition. The Jews are in position to be ruled by the Antichrist, whose reign does not truly begin until the Two Witnesses are slain by him.

4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

These men are God's preachers and prophets. They are ministers of light in a spiritually darkened generation. They are His voice in a world that has become totally bankrupt of righteousness and morality. The symbolism is derived from Zechariah chapters 3 and 4. These two men will be empowered by the Holy Spirit to shine as

lamps during the Tribulation. Some commentators believe that the two men in shining apparel at the tomb (Luke 24:4).

Luke 24:4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments.

The two men in white at the ascension (Acts 1:10) are the same two faithful witnesses described in this chapter.

Acts 1:10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel.

5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

For 3½ years no one will be able to cause these two men any harm. Those trying to do so, or even hinder their preaching, will be instantly destroyed. They will have the power to speak words that mean death for those who oppose them. This is what the “fire” possibly refers to. Their ministry is unstoppable, until God says so.

6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

During the 3½ years of their ministry they will have the power to stop the rain, just as Elijah did (see 1 Kings 17; James 5:17).

James 5:17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

They turn the drinking water into a blood-like substance, just as Moses did (Exodus 7-11). According to Revelation 7:1 there will be no wind during some of this period, so no water will be brought inland to fall as rain.

Revelation 7:1 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

They will also have the authority to bring infectious diseases upon the earth, as Moses did. These are God's judgements that will cause some to "learn righteousness" (Isaiah 26:9).

Isaiah 26:9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

Their earthly ministry will end with their deaths. The Antichrist, under the permissive will of God, will kill them. The Beast will think that he has gained the victory over his two enemies who have tormented him over the last 3½ years. He is called 'The Beast' to indicate that he is the same person mentioned in Daniel 7:7 six centuries before.

Daniel 7:7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

The word "finished" here is exactly the same as in John 19:30 where Jesus cried, "**It is finished**". Jesus died in Jerusalem when He completed the work of Redemption. The two witnesses will die in Jerusalem when they complete the work God has called them to.

8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

The bodies of the Two Witnesses will lie on the streets of Jerusalem for 3½ days. This means that they will be on public display, and that the eyes of the entire world will be upon them.

Here the Lord describes the true spiritual condition of Jerusalem at that time. He nicknames the city Sodom and Egypt. This reveals just how few there will be who truly believe in God, since the majority will have totally abandoned the true God of Israel. Also, the mention of Egypt and Sodom may refer to their hardheartedness and the rampant sin of homosexuality. The Holy City is anything but holy! Remember that they think they have their Messiah, temple, city and land. They will think that they are under the blessing of God.

9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

The Antichrist will leave the bodies on show for three and a half days as a sign of the utter contempt he has for the men. The dead bodies of the Two Witnesses will make international news, for the television cameras of all the nations will be focused on them. The Antichrist will no doubt portray himself as the hero who finally put an end to these two men, and state that he is obviously more powerful than God. They will lie in the streets for three and a half days, one day for each year the people rejected their ministry.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

These 3½ days will be a time of great celebration in Israel. Everyone will be rejoicing over the death of the two prophets,

especially since they do not have to endure their preaching of gloom and doom. These days will be an international holiday. People will be really humanitarian as they give gifts to each other! It should be noted that this is the only mention of joy on earth during the Tribulation.

11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

Then ... during their celebrations the unthinkable happens! The Two Witnesses suddenly stand upon their feet. People are totally stupid to believe that any man, devil or fallen angel can outmanoeuvre the God of Heaven. The “Spirit of Life” is the animating power of the Holy Spirit rather than merely “the breath of life” as in some versions of the Scriptures. The world will be in a state of absolute shock.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

As the television cameras of the world focus upon them, they rise (Raptured) into Heaven. This should be a tremendous sign to the Jews – for their true Messiah ascended also over two thousand years previously. They will ascend into a cloud of glory. We can certainly imagine the fear that this causes throughout the world. With the Rapture of the Church, it was as quick as a blink of an eye (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

But here it appears to be a slow catching up similar to Jesus' Ascension (Acts 1:9).

Acts 1:9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

God always calls His own to Himself.

13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Immediately after the Two Witnesses disappear from view, a massive earthquake will rock Jerusalem so that a 10th of the city is destroyed, and 7,000 people die. This causes fear, and some, a remnant (a few), glorify the true God. They realise that the Bible has been true all along. This does not infer that they will become believers, because evidently they will not, instead they simply acknowledge that God is greater than the forces ruling the earth at that time. Nevertheless, it is possible, even at this late stage, that some will turn to the Lord rather than follow the Antichrist. It is certain that millions will survive the seven year period and will be invited by Christ into His Millennial Kingdom (Matthew 25:31-46).

Matthew 25:31-46 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee

drink? [38] When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

14 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

The rest of the judgements of God will come upon the earth almost immediately. This will begin at the sounding of the 7th trumpet. People will think it can't get any worse, but they will be wrong.

Seventh Trumpet:

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

The seventh trumpet blast will mark the beginning of the second half of the Tribulation period and should be compared with Daniel 9:26-27.

Daniel 9:26-27 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall

come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

It brings with it the seven Vial Judgements which are ready to be released during the final three and half years.

The great (loud) voices are probably the whole of Heaven in unison giving glory to God. They see that the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on earth is not far away, which will take place after the seventh trumpet. Until that point, since the fall of man, the world has been controlled by Satan and demons (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Corinthians 4:4).

John 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

John 14:30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

John 16:11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

2 Corinthians 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Soon the Lord Jesus Christ will take back what is rightfully His when He sets up the promised Messianic Kingdom (Isaiah 2:2-3; Daniel 2:44; 7:13-18, 22, 27; Luke 1:31-33).

Isaiah 2:2-3 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and

let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

Daniel 7:13-18, 22, 27 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. [22] Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. [27] And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

Luke 1:31-33 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

When they hear the proclamation of the Kingdom, the twenty four elders prostrate themselves before the Throne in worship and

adoration. This stands in stark contrast to the godless rebellion taking place on Earth.

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

They worship the Sovereign, Omnipotent, Eternal God, the Creator of all things, and to whom all things belong (Psalm 90:2).

Psalm 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Soon the rule of Satan and the Antichrist will be put to an end. Notice that this text is given in the past tense to show the certainty of Christ's Reign.

18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

Psalm 2 is a perfect commentary on the opening phrase of this verse.

Psalm 2 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt

break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

This anger was inspired by demons to get the world further away from the Truth. It is certain that we live in a very angry world today, so what is it going to be like during the Tribulation? The world has enough opportunities to repent, but few did so. Now all that is left is for God's wrath to be poured out (Romans 2:5,8).

Romans 2:5,8 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; [8] But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.

God's first commandment to man was to "have dominion over the earth" and to "subdue" it (Genesis 1:26-28), but instead, under the leadership of Satanic forces, Man has chosen to destroy it by violence and greed. Because of this, judgement awaits all who destroy God's wonderful creation.

19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

The Ark was symbolic of God's presence on earth in the Tabernacle and Temple. It was the emblem of the Atonement, of mercy and grace. From 2 Chronicles 35:3 we have no further mention of the Ark.

2 Chronicles 35:3 And said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the LORD, Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; it shall not

be a burden upon your shoulders: serve now the LORD your God, and his people Israel.

Some say it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar or the Babylonians when the vessels of the Temple were carried away (2 Chronicles 36:18-19).

2 Chronicles 36:18-19 And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.

Others think that Jeremiah may have hidden it in a cave. “Jeremiah came and found a cave-dwelling, and he brought there the tent and the ark and the altar of incense; then he sealed up the entrance” (2 Maccabees 2:5). The one in Heaven is the real Ark, for the one built by Moses was only a replica (Hebrews 9:24).

Hebrews 9:24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

Some believe that the Ark was transported to Heaven in the days of Jeremiah, but this, though an intriguing notion, is not supported by Scripture.

The mention of the Ark at this stage reveals that it is about to fulfil its purpose within the covenant with Israel. The Jews will come to Christ as a nation and take full possession of the Promised Land during the Millennium.

The lightnings, thunders, earthquake and hail must be on earth, for no such damage can occur in Heaven. John has seen the glory of Heaven, and then he witnesses the destruction of the earth.